

Fact Sheet: Norovirus

What are noroviruses?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause gastroenteritis (the "stomach flu") in people. Norovirus can survive on surfaces for several days. Norovirus is very contagious and can spread easily from person to person. You can get norovirus many times in your life.

What are the symptoms?

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramping
- Low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness (in some people)

Symptoms usually begin about 24-48 hours after exposure, but may appear within 12 hours. The illness begins very suddenly and the infected person feels very sick. Symptoms usually last 1-2 days. People are contagious from the moment they become ill to at least 3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for up to 2 weeks after recovery.

How is it spread?

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected persons.

People become infected by:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then touching your mouth
- Having direct contact with someone who is infected and showing symptoms
- Eating raw or under cooked oysters from contaminated waters

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

How is it treated?

- There is no antiviral medication that works against norovirus and there is no vaccine to prevent infection
- Norovirus infection cannot be treated with an antibiotic
- For children, an oral rehydration fluid such as Pedialyte, Ceralyte, or Oralyte can be used to prevent dehydration
- Adults should drink clear liquids and avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages

What are the symptoms of dehydration?

- Decrease in urination
- Dry mouth and throat
- Feeling dizzy when standing up

Children with dehydration may cry without tears and be unusually sleepy or fussy.

If you or a family member has symptoms of dehydration or is at increased risk, talk to your health care provider.

How is it prevented?

- Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after using the restroom, changing diapers and before eating or preparing food
- Use a hand sanitizer when you cannot wash your hands
- Use a solution made with one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of water to clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces
- Immediately wash any soiled clothing or linens with hot water and soap
- Flush any vomit or stool in the toilet and make sure the surrounding area is kept clean
- Cook oysters and other shellfish completely to kill the virus
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- Do NOT prepare food while you have symptoms and for 3 days after recovery. Any food that may have been contaminated by an infected person should be thrown away.

Guidelines For Environmental Cleaning And Disinfection of Norovirus:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/NorovirusEnvironCleaning_281018_7.pdf

